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Staying Fabulous Over Fifty

bella fashion
& shopping



With years of experience as an owner of retail fashion stores, esthetician, pilates instructor and image consulting, Belgium native Michele Benza brings all her talents to bear for her clients and readers all over the country. She focuses on creating self-confidence and radiance by improving her clients' image and posture. Michele is a member of the Association of Image Consultants International, a member of Association Française pour l'Image Personnelle et Professionnelle, and is a columnist for www.50Fabulous.com as well as a guest writer for Bay Area Women's Journal. We were so excited to chat with Michele and get an expert's advice for staying fabulous over fifty!

1. What do you see as the biggest style concern of women over 50?

The biggest style concern for women over 50 is "Do I dress appropriately for my age," "Do I dress too young, too old, or too classic?"

2. What are the top 5 products or items that women over 50 must have?

Every woman needs a skin care line. As far as items: a great coat, a leather bag, a great lipstick, sunglasses, and trendy shoes. I say skin care line because our face is of most importance – all people look at it. It's important to have healthy-looking skin. With a coat, you can wear it over jeans or exercise gear and have a put-together look. A woman should have a real leather bag. Leather look-alikes look very cheap. But make sure the investment is a right one depending on body type and age. Lipstick is third because by just putting that on, you're already half made-up! Sunglasses hide your eyes if you don't have time for make-up and are useful, but they need to fit your face. Last is a trendy shoe. Of course, high heels are great for every woman, but you should not wear high heels if you cannot walk in high heels because it looks ridiculous!

3. What do you see as the current trends for women over 50 in terms of fashion?

I don't see current trends for women over 50. Fashion trends can be adopted such as in designer magazines, it may seem that it is packed with teenage clothes but it can work for women over 50 because in stores, they alter clothing to make it work all types. So, I don't really see a current trend. Everything in stores can work for women over 50. They should be more concerned not to overdo it. A leather bag may be just enough. You don't need to have every young and trendy item on at once.

4. What are a few hair and makeup tips for women over 50?

Women over 50 need to lighten up their make-up and go for a more natural look. They should go to a make-up artist once or twice a year. Older women need to learn how to love their gray hair and not color it too soon. And it's time for a change if you've had the same hairstyle for many years and also if you have the same stylist.

5. What are some things that women over 50 should avoid wearing?

Definitely baggy, shapeless clothes or clothes which are too-fitting. Mini skirts and shorts should be avoided as well as pleated pants. Avoid pants that fit on the waist (they should fit just below the waist) and skirts that are too long (they should fall at the knee-cap).

6. How should women 50 and over take care of their skin to keep them looking young and radiant?

Grooming is most important and should be at the top of everyone's list. Women should religiously use a skin care regimen twice a day and use moisturizer with SPF even if the sun is not shining. A big mistake that a lot of women make is going to bed wearing make-up. NEVER go to bed with make-up on!

7. What is your secret to staying beautiful and confident?

Discipline and consistency. I exercise everyday and my routine consists of yoga, pilates, and I also have a personal fitness trainer. It keeps my body in shape and keeps me full of energy. I do grooming from head to toe, and I have a young, hip hairstylist. I never go out the door if I'm not impeccable! A woman should have a full-length mirror next to the door and check it before leaving the house. Consistency is important because I don't want people to see me looking great one day, then really bad on another.

8. How can women 50 and over look classy, yet fashionable and trendy?

A mistake women make is that they dress like their mothers and even shop in the same stores. One secret I use is if I hesitate to buy something, I ask myself "Would my mother wear this?" If so, I don't buy it! Think young, and use minimal details in clothing. Less color is better. The maximum color a woman should wear is three, and older women should only wear two.

Some advice I have is to learn your best facial features so that you can enhance your physical qualities. Also figure out your budget and what to wear for your body type and age. You need to know what flatters you. An appointment with an image consultant is great, but they all have different styles and personalities. It's good to have chemistry and the match has to be perfect.

For more information about Michele Benza, log onto www.michelebenza.com and make sure to check out her fashion columns each month at www.50fabulous.com



"The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age."

Lucille Ball

SHOP TALK

Kira Kira
West Village, 3555
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Kira Kira, a unique "beautique" and natural nail studio has just opened a new location in the West Village Shopping Center. Walk into this hip shop and instantly you're standing in a trendy, metropolitan store with an urban loft feel.

With products from bareMinerals by bareEscentuals, OPI nail polish, Duwop, Blinec, and Julie Hewett LA, the women of Kira Kira are prepared to take care of all your needs, whether you just need to relax with a manicure/pedicure or for a night out on the town. The sisterhood of Kira Kira welcome you to come in, play with the products, and feel good about yourself.

Aside from being there for women for wind-down time or girls night out, Kira Kira is involved with the competitive Fusion Fashion Show and they are partnered with photographers and filmographers to ensure that people look and feel their very best.

When it comes to makeup, they start with your skincare and basic foundations, and keeping in mind your own personal style. Abby, Kira Kira's makeup artist, uses her different techniques to make her clients feel beautiful, comfortable and relaxed.

Owner Tara Sheperd says, "We are so used to putting our make-up on ourselves, rushing through the process. It's nice to come in and just decompress and let someone else do the work. Sometimes we just need that."

For your next night out on the town or if you just want to relax and have someone else do all the work, visit Kira Kira. The ladies there are more than happy to serve you and remind you of how beautiful you really are! They are open Monday through Thursday 10-8, Friday and Saturday 10-6, and are available by request for group parties on Friday and Saturday evenings.

- Brittany Johnson